

Stakes Race Recap



CHURCHILL DOWNS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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CLASSIC EMPIRE RUNS DOWN RECRUITING READY TO WIN BASHFORD MANOR

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, July 2, 2016) – John C. Oxley's **Classic Empire** sat off the pace set by speedy Maryland-invader **Recruiting Ready** but flew home late in the stretch to collar the 1-2 favorite in the final strides and win Saturday night's 115th running of the \$100,000 Bashford Manor Presented by Thorntons (Grade III) – the first of three stakes events on closing night of Churchill Downs' 38-day Spring Meet.

Trained by **Mark Casse** and ridden by **Julien Leparoux**, **Classic Empire** ran six furlongs over a fast main track in 1:09.39 – the second fastest Bashford Manor only .24 behind **Kodiak Kowboy**'s 1:09.15 in 2007.

Recruiting Ready flashed his brilliant speed from the gate on the outside and led the field of nine 2-year-old colts and geldings through an opening quarter mile in :21.76 and a half :45.07 as **Tip Tap Tapizar** attempted to keep pace from the inside. **Classic Empire**, who broke tardy from post one as the 9-2 second betting choice, had one horse beat early as the leaders pushed on.

Recruiting Ready opened up a 1 ½-length lead with three furlongs to run as **Classic Empire** began to hit his best stride around the turn and found an opening along the inside rail at the head of the stretch. **Recruiting Ready** appeared to have the race under control with a two-length lead and a sixteenth of a mile left, but the bold late run by **Classic Empire** could not be denied and he'd win powerfully by three-quarters of a length.

"The pace set up for him and he was able to run down a very talented horse today," said **Norman Casse**, son and assistant trainer for his father Mark, who would win his first Churchill Downs training title since the 1988 Spring Meet. "I really have a whole lot of respect for the horse that he beat and this is something we can all look forward to."

The triumph was worth \$59,520 and increased **Classic Empire**'s bankroll to \$85,920 with a perfect record in two starts. Previously, he won his career debut by 1 ½ lengths over sloppy going in a 4 ½-furlong maiden special weight on May 4 at Churchill Downs.

Classic Empire is a 2-year-old son of **Pioneerof the Nile** out of the Cat Thief mare **Sambuca Classica**. He was bred in Kentucky by **Steven Nicholson** and **Brandi Nicholson**.

Classic Empire returned \$11.40, \$3.80 and \$2.80. **Recruiting Ready**, with **Edgar Prado** up, paid \$2.40 and \$2.10 and finished nine lengths in front of **Tip Tap Tapizar** who paid \$2.80 to show under **Ricardo Santana Jr.**

Boys From Boston, **Raising Rumors**, **Riv**, **My Golden Aura**, **U S Officer** and **Capt. Grider** completed the order of finish.

First run in 1902, the Bashford Manor is named for the former Louisville Thoroughbred breeding and racing farm that dominated the American racing scene in the early 1900s. **George J. Long**, a wealthy foundry owner, purchased **Bashford Manor Farm** in 1887 and developed his Thoroughbred operation that provided him two Derby wins as an owner, 1892 (**Azra**) and 1906 (**Sir Huon**), and three as a breeder, 1892 (**Azra**), 1899 (**Manuel**) and 1906 (**Sir Huon**). In addition, Bashford Manor also won the Kentucky Oaks in 1894 (**Selika**) and 1915 (**Kathleen**). The original **Wilder family** owned Bashford Manor. The Wilders were direct descendants of **Lord Baltimore**, whose English home was also called Bashford Manor. Long died in 1930 and the farm was eventually sold in 1973 to make way for the development of a mall complex, fittingly named Bashford Manor, that formally closed in 2003.

BASHFORD MANOR QUOTES

NORMAN CASSE, assistant trainer of CLASSIC EMPIRE (winner): “He broke bad the other day, I don’t know what was up with that but anytime that you’re in the one-hole with a 2-year-old, you’re apprehensive about it. I think he’s still a little shy at horses. You can tell when he broke that he broke in a little bit and kind of ducked out, but it ended up working out to his advantage a little bit. The pace set up for him and he was able to run down a very talented horse today. I really have a whole lot of respect for the horse that he beat and this is something we can all look forward to. I think that the way that he breezes and trains in the morning, he is more effective when he’s able to go out and relax and settle into stride. Sprinting is obviously something where you aren’t able to do that so going forward, he’s going to be more effective around two turns. He’ll go up and train at Saratoga and we’ll look for a race up there for him.”

JULIEN LEPAROUX, jockey of CLASSIC EMPIRE (winner): “The other one (**Recruiting Ready**) never quit, but I knew that my horse was running. At the quarter pole I knew he was going to run well, but I didn’t know if I was going to catch him or not. Being in the one-hole kind of hurt us today, but I’m glad that he could win today. The first time when he won at four-and-a-half (furlongs), he was almost too quick and he still won, but today at six furlongs I liked it. He was useful but we were down inside and he’s still a baby so when he broke slow he was kind of looking at all of the horses outside of him so he was a little green but after that he was very professional.”

HORACIO DePAZ, trainer of RECRUITING READY (runner-up at the 1-2 favorite): “He ran well. He just ran fast early and got caught at the end. Edgar (Prado) said he was a little spotty coming down the front side – kind of running on-and-off. Once that other horse (Classic Empire) engaged him galloping out he jumped back in the bridle and galloped out with him. It was probably a little bit of a lack of experience, and he’d never been under lights.

“He shipped all the way from Maryland and got settled in here in a new environment. The weather’s been great, so it’s not like it’s been horrible, humid hot days. But he’s going to get a lot out of this and we’ve got a long future with him. He obviously can run really fast. We’ve just got to harness it a bit at the beginning and not let him lollygag at the end. For being a big-bodied horse, he’s pretty mature mentally. He’s a May foal, too, so he’s got a lot of maturing to do. So hopefully we can move forward pretty good off that.”

Q: *Well, you did get a race over the track at Churchill Downs if you want to look pretty far down the road ...*
“Hopefully, we can come back next year. It’s a long road. We know he likes Pimlico, so hopefully we can bring him back to Churchill (for the Derby). And we won’t be under lights then.”

EDGAR PRADO, jockey on RECRUITING READY (runner-up): “He broke so fast. The plan was to let two other horses go and lay third on the outside, but when he broke so fast he went to the front so easy, I didn’t want to get into a battle with him. He’s was moving along pretty good and at the top of the stretch he opened up, but like a 2-year-old he was looking around a little bit and looking at the lights.

“The first time he won, he didn’t do much really. He just cruised along all the way. Hopefully he can learn from this race and move forward.”

STEVE ASMUSSEN, trainer of TIP TAP TAPIZAR (third): “He ran really well. He’s a little colt that will physically develop and he’ll be a nice horse.”

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